GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(The National Geographic Society is a scientific and educational Society, wholly altruistic, incorporated under the Federal law as a non-commercial institution for the increase of geographic knowledge and its popular diffusion.)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

Contents For Week of November 29, 1926. Vol. V. No. 19.

1. Diplomatic Corps Gets Modern Attachments.
2. New Light on Western China.
3. Winds That Blow Up and Down.
4. Jute: An Important British Product.
5. Pygmies Still Arouse World-Wide Interest.

© National Geographic Society

CAMP OF CAMEL DRIVERS

These Chinese frontiersmen boil flour paste in a copper pot to make a crude sort of macaroni, to be washed down with strong tea. The cask is used to carry water.

HOW TEACHERS MAY OBTAIN THE BULLETINS

The Geographic News Bulletins are published weekly throughout the school year (thirty issues) and will be mailed to teachers for one year upon receipt of 25 cents (in stamps or money order). Entered as second-class matter, January 27, 1922, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized February 9, 1922.

GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(Founded in 1888 for the Increase and Diffusion of Geographic Knowledge)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

Diplomatic Corps Gets Modern Attachments

DIPLOMATIC history has been made recently with the definite decision to send a Canadian minister to Washington and the designation by Russia of Madame Alexandra Kollontai as Minister to Mexico—the first woman envoy to the New World. Only a short time ago Professor Timothy A. Smiddy was given a ministerial post in Washington from previously envoyless Ireland.

A Princess of Wales Was Ambassador

Russia's new minister to Mexico served first as envoy to Norway in 1924 and at that time became the first feminine "minister plenipotentiary" to enter the diplomatic corps since that specific position and body were recognized by the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the follow-up Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818; and she is one of the very few women ever to become an envoy of a sovereign state. Catherine of Aragon is the most famous predecessor of Madame Kollontai, and she scarcely deserves a similar classification. While she was Princess of Wales, her father, Ferdinand the Catholic, named her his ambassador to the court of Henry VII. It was a hollow honor, largely to increase her prestige with the English.

The appointment of Professor Smiddy and the announcement that Canada will soon be represented in Washington are somewhat less precedent-smashing. From the 16th century until the beginning of the 19th the component states of the so-called Holy Roman Empire sent envoys to foreign courts. The situation was not entirely parallel with that of the modern British "Empire," however, for the "Holy Roman Emperor" was never represented by envoys—on the theory that his dignity was too great. The simultaneous existence now of an ambassador from an over-state and ministers from two of its component parts, sets a true precedent.

First Ambassadors Mere Messengers

The growth of the diplomatic corps as an institution has been slow. Special envoys undoubtedly were sent from court to court of the earliest historic empires such as those of Egypt and Babylonia. Later in Grecian, Roman and Byzantine days the practice was fairly common. But in all such cases, as far as history discloses, the messengers were sent to transact specific business and returned as soon as possible to report the results of their mission.

In the west the Republic of Venice seems to have been the pioneer in the establishment of embassies. In the 12th and 13th centuries the terms of Venetian envoys were limited to two or three months. Strict rules hedged them round. Any gifts received from courts visited had to be turned over to the Republic and written reports had to be filed with the Senate. In the 15th century the ambassadorial term was extended to a maximum of two years and in the 16th century, to three years.

First Permanent Embassies in Italy

The earliest record of the appointment of a resident ambassador—though probably this was not the first ambassador so appointed—was in regard to the sending in 1455 of an envoy from the Duke of Milan to reside at Genoa. One

© National Geographic Society

BUGLERS AT WANG YE FU, WESTERN CHINA

Although Wang Ye Fu was founded nearly 250 years ago, most of its inhabitants are still nomad herdsmen. It has something approaching a court and is one of the few border towns affording the nomads a glimpse of settled city life.

GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(Founded in 1888 for the Increase and Diffusion of Geographic Knowledge)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

New Light on Western China

AHITHERTO unknown toad found by zoologists among specimens brought from far Western China by F. R. Wulsin, leader of a National Geographic Society Expedition, demonstrates the by-products that come to science from geographic exploration.

On his journey to an almost unknown corner of China, made in part along the Yellow River aboard a raft of 72 yak skins, Mr. Wulsin encountered curious peoples who were lost tribes of early Asiatic migrations. He reported principally upon the non-Chinese tribes of northeast China, and he mentioned also blonde tribes with curly, yellow hair.

Women Wear Hatchets and Earrings

In some localities mosques like pagodas, with towers for minarets, betoken the presence of Moslem settlements—remnants of Arab and Turkish penetrations of this long-deserted racial crossroads.

Most interesting of all the groups, from the standpoint of race history, are the "To Runs," a distinct population, whose name is a Chinese expression literally meaning "earth men," which is taken to mean aborigines, or natives. They flee from a camera as they would from a rifle, they seem to have no idea of their ages, the women frequently wear woodcutters' hatchets thrust in their girdles, their most cherished articles of adornment are earrings and a peculiar "head harness."

"I was informed that unmarried girls wear from 20 to 30 braids which hang loose all around; married women do their hair in a knot at the back of the head, covered with a little brass cap which is held in place by a harness of red or black cloth," Mr. Wulsin writes.

"What front and side hair is not caught in the knot hangs loose over the cheeks and shoulders. The harness in question consists of a cloth band which goes around the head at the height of the temples, and a central strip which lies on the top of the head, sewed to the first strip at the forehead and back."

Has "Built In" Pig Pen

The To Runs have their own language. It is not written, and its origin has not been determined.

A To Run house has a "built in" pig pen and stable. Its rooms are arranged around a tiny courtyard, at one end of the court is a mud-floor porch, and around the establishment is a mud wall, six or seven feet high.

Other non-Chinese groups noted by Mr. Wulsin are the Alashan Mongols, who inhabit the desert north of Kansu; the aforementioned Moslems, whose stronghold is in western Kansu; Tibetans, both nomad and sedentary, found principally around Kokonor Lake and in the southwest of the province; and the so-called Choni Tibetans, who live along the Min Shan range on Kansu's southern border.

"The women seem to do all the work; the men are idle at home," Mr. Wulsin writes. "In one place we visited the whole house seemed living because of our hostess, who was always on the run, smiling; first upstairs for fuel, then downstairs for cooking, to the valley for water and upstairs once more to watch us. Her husband seemed merely a very idle boarder."

UMI

of the first permanent embassies outside Italy was created in 1494 when Milan sent a minister to take up his residence at the court of France. In the same year a Spanish ambassador went to reside in London. This is believed to be the oldest surviving diplomatic post in existence. By the second half of the 16th century resident embassies had become the normal means of intercourse between important countries.

The term, "ambassador," was given to the world by Venice where it first appeared in the form, "ambasiator," in a decree of 1268. At first there were no degrees among the envoys of states. The ambassador was considered the vicar of his sovereign and was received with royal honors and had to maintain a sort of little court. This became embarrassing both because of the expense and because it was a handicap in attending to business. The custom grew, therefore, of sending less important individuals as envoys or messengers. These, not hedged about by pomp, proved much more efficient agents. Later it became customary to accord the rank of the envoy to the importance of the country sending or receiving him, and a gradation in representatives grew up.

Bulletin No. 1, November 29, 1926.

© National Geographic Society

A DIPLOMAT EXTRAORDINARY

The Prince of Wales has never served as an actual ambassador, but on his almost continuous visits about the world he really serves as Britain's envoy extraordinary for the cultivation of good will.

GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(Founded in 1888 for the Increase and Diffusion of Geographic Knowledge)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

Winds That Blow Up and Down

THE LATEST tornado in the United States, which struck a small Maryland village outside the usual tornado zone, illustrates the queer quirks of winds. The destruction of the huge dirigible, the *Shenandoah,* a year ago, disclosed what are probably the strangest winds of all to the ordinary person—winds that blow up and down. But far from being unusual, such "vertical winds" lie at the heart of some of our best known weather phenomena. Every flash of lightning that you see, or that you hear as thunder, and every pellet of hail that falls is probably due to a "vertical wind." These are the fruits of rather violent upward and downward blasts. If you consider as well the gentler rising and falling currents—the "vertical breezes," let us say—you must take pretty much the whole field of weather for your sphere.

Rising Air Important Weather Factor

Practically every surface wind, whatever be its direction or speed, is moving along to replace air which has risen. Clouds, too, are built by rising air. The elusive little circles on weather maps that denote "lows" and "highs" are in final analysis the representation of upward and downward air currents. Where cold air from the upper regions flows down it compresses the surface atmosphere and produces a "high"; where the air, because of heat, is rising, it relieves the pressure and forms a "low." Most weather phenomena are due to the interplay of forces between "highs" and "lows," which bring in their train changes in wind, temperature and humidity.

The most spectacular of the effects of "vertical" winds are thunder storms. As the tracer bullet marks the flight of projectiles for a marksman, so the great towering "thunder head" marks the upward rush of the invisible wind. Often these thunder clouds may be seen growing before one's eye. Seldom is the growth slow and orderly. More often it is violent, and the upsurging clouds appear to boil madly. Thunder storms are usually local affairs and the wind that has rushed upward must come quickly earthward again to restore the atmospheric balance. In the rear of thunder storms, therefore, strong downward currents are usually encountered. It was such an upward then downward rush of air, apparently, that played an important part in the destruction of the *Shenandoah.*

Where Lightning Comes From

Until comparatively recently the origin of the tremendous charges of electricity in a thunder storm baffled science. Now it is pretty generally believed that they are caused by the upward gusts of air—that these are in truth the dynamos of the sky. The building up of the electrical charges is supposed to be brought about by the gusts blasting raindrops to pieces, the smaller fragments carrying negative charges upward while the large droplets with positive charges remain behind. Hostile forces are established and when the strain becomes too great it is relieved by a lightning flash. When the negatively charged upper cloud floats away before the strain is relieved, the flash is to the earth.

"Vertical winds" are also credited with the production of hail, and their onionlike structure bears out the theory. Raindrops carried upward by the less violent gusts, according to this hypothesis, are frozen in the cold upper air.

A Puzzled Bribe Giver

The Choni Tibetans retain their individuality partly because they inhabit inaccessible mountains. At their capital, Choni, on the Tao River, lives the hereditary Chinese ruler of 48 tribes of this people. He can levy taxes, quell rebellions, and administer punishment, but the Chinese say of him, "He has the pig's head, but cannot find the door of the temple." They imply that he is willing to give bribes to keep his position, but too many officials expect them, and he cannot tell which deserve the largest.

Mr. Wulsin's study of the province included also extensive botanical and zoological observations. One tree he mentions, known locally as the "red birch" is a boon to traders. It has a shining, brown, papery bark which peels off in large, thin sheets which are used by Tibetans and Chinese for wrapping butter and other food articles.

Bulletin No. 2, November 29, 1926.

© *National Geographic Society*

BALES OF JUTE BAGS FROM INDIA

Jute is used for making bags for grain, fertilizer and many other American products. One of its most important uses is in covering bales of cotton (see Bulletin No. 4).

GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(Founded in 1888 for the Increase and Diffusion of Geographic Knowledge)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

Jute: An Important British Product

WHEN rubber prices fell not long ago, the price of jute went up.

Most Americans who know well their needs for rubber may have considered the situation entirely satisfactory; but as a matter of fact a considerable part of our national savings on rubber had to be spent for the higher priced jute. Jute is not well known. It has traveled in our country usually under the incognitos, "gunny sack" and "burlap." But it enters, just the same, into the costs of our potatoes, grain, cotton shirts, linoleum and rugs.

Some "One Place" Products

Jute is more a resource than a product. Nature has put jute in one place almost in the manner she restricted anthracite coal to a tiny pocket of Pennsylvania or cached iron ore worth a European war debt in the Mesaba district of Minnesota. India can no more help being the sole large producer of gunny sacking and burlap than Colombia can help being the world's chief producer of emeralds.

Jute is a plant and not a mineral, but successful production of it seems to be limited to the double delta of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra Rivers. Since the State of Bengal encompasses the delta, it has become famous for jute as well as tigers. In the delta jute enjoys that prodigal type of agriculture, usually associated with Egypt, by which the highlands are annually robbed of their slender store of soil to fertilize flood plains with a new layer of rich dirt. This scraggly annual jute-producing bush also has adapted its constitution to the monsoon schedule of rains. Thus far it has refused to amend either or both of these habits of life when transplanted to a new environment. Since the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta is the only place in the world where the two factors are brought together, India has a natural monopoly on jute.

Social Register of the Fibers

The native name of the plant from which comes the jute of commerce is *pat*. It is a valued member of the flax, hemp, sisal (henequin) line of the first fiber families of the world. Flax is the spotless aristocrat; hemp and jute are solid middle-class fibers, each inured to heavy work and honest dirt. Flax says jute is coarse. Hemp overlooks this issue, but whispers the gossip that the real reasons that jute is not acceptable in hemp society are its lack of stamina to stand strain and a yellow complexion that bleaching powders cannot whiten. Jute fibers are very long, usually six to ten feet, sometimes attaining fourteen or fifteen feet.

Although jute is constantly finding new work to do in America, it will never acquire the myriad uses assigned to it in India. There it is string and rope, a baglike net for carrying wood or hay on bullocks, a stuff for tying cotton and cloth bales, a hammock for the baby, a swinging shelf, rug, brush, underwear, hairband and stage hair, incense stick, a muzzle for cattle, etc. America is most familiar with it in the guise of gunny sacks for carrying innumerable things to market. The South goes half way around the earth for jute, a fiber, to wrap another fiber, cotton, in bales for market. Jute is the base for linoleum in the kitchen and, very often, the rug in the dining room. It is the foundation of upholstery and auto

UMI

Sinking in the boiling cloud they acquire more moisture on the lower levels and are again carried to the freezing region. On the number of skyward trips made before they escape from the boiling cloud and fall earthward depends the size of the hailstones.

Bulletin No. 3, November 29, 1926.

Membership in The National Geographic Society

TEACHERS constantly inquire about membership in the National Geographic Society, and the procedure necessary to obtain the *National Geographic Magazine*, so highly valued in schools, and The Society's maps and panoramas which also go to members.

The National Geographic Society is an altruistic, non-commercial, educational institution, in which membership is acquired only through nomination by persons who already are members. The Society is supported entirely by the dues of its members, and these dues are devoted wholly to issuance of *The Geographic* and other publications which members receive, and to The Society's scientific expeditions and educational work, such as that represented by its GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS and Pictorial Geography sets. (Description sent on request.)

A major problem of visual teaching is procuring adequate pictures. Thousands of teachers are finding the *National Geographic Magazine* indispensable, for their personal use and an invaluable adjunct in classrooms because of its unique photographs, marvelous color series and its articles on Nature, industries, popular science, explorations and other phases of humanized geography.

Yearly *The Geographic* publishes 1,400 or more photographs, many of them obtainable nowhere else, and even a fraction of this number of geographic photographs, commercially published, would cost many times the annual dues of $3.

For your convenience a nomination blank, which members use in nominating their friends to the rich benefits of membership, is attached:

DUES

Annual membership in U. S., $3.00; annual membership abroad, $4.00; Canada, $3.50; life membership, $100. Please make remittances payable to the National Geographic Society, and if at a distance remit by New York draft, postal or express order.

RECOMMENDATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

IN THE

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

The Membership Fee Includes Subscription to the National Geographic Magazine

PLEASE DETACH AND FILL IN BLANK BELOW AND SEND TO THE SECRETARY

.....192

To the Secretary, National Geographic Society,
Sixteenth and M Streets Northwest, Washington, D. C.:

I nominate.....

Occupation.....
(This information is important for the records.)

Address.....

.....

for membership in the Society.

.....

.....
Name and Address of Nominating Member

b-88

GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(Founded in 1888 for the Increase and Diffusion of Geographic Knowledge)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

Pygmies Still Arouse World-Wide Interest

FOR MORE than 5,000 years Pygmies have been known to exist, yet the recent discovery of a new tribe of these human dwarfs in Dutch New Guinea renews interest in them.

Pygmy peoples are distributed over wide areas, including the Philippines, which are inhabited by the largest groups; the Andaman Islands of the Bay of Bengal; New Guinea; the interior of the Malay Peninsula; and the Congo regions of Africa. With few exceptions they are similar in characteristics.

Live Like Monkeys

The smallest Pygmies are those of Africa, where the men seldom are more than 4½ feet tall and the women reach only 3½ feet. If one imagines an eight-year-old southern "piccaninny" with a well-formed, muscular body, a mouth reaching from the center of each cheek, a flattened nose, a protruding upper jaw and a slanting forehead which gives him an apish appearance and a mature expression, then one has a mental picture of a Pygmy man.

Many of these little fellows live so much like monkeys that they have been suspected of being the "missing link." They look upon any kind of work with scorn, and a hoe or any other instrument of agriculture would be a curiosity to them.

Wild fruits, nuts, tender shoots and various roots are favorites in their diet, and for meat they go hunting. Birds and small game are food staples, with occasional delicacies such as elephants, rats and caterpillars.

Always on the Move

Modern landlords would become bankrupt in Pygmyland. Many of the tribes remain in one place only a week or two; then, when their sources of easy-gotten food are exhausted they move on to another region. There they stay until the choice roots and fruits are consumed, and the birds and wild game are scared away by their arrows.

The number of children is relatively small for so primitive a people, and there is nothing lost in leaving a twig-built hut with a leafy roof. Their baggage is mostly bows and arrows.

The Pygmies, unlike their neighbor tribes, usually have no chiefs, though they often rally around a superior huntsman as a leader. Formal laws are unknown among them but they follow strict moral codes. Fighting is seldom noted, and murders are few. When a murder is committed in a Pygmy village there is no trial, but the murderer risks being killed from ambush by his victim's next-of-kin.

Have Reputation for Honesty

Explorers attest that lying and stealing are uncommon among the little people and tribes which do not usually trust fellow tribesmen are so impressed with Pygmy honesty that the Pygmy often becomes a cattle tender for his taller neighbors.

When the young Pygmy's fancy turns to love he begins to count his arrows,

tops. Much tarpaulin, the heavy waterproof covering which, incidentally, gives us the nickname "tar" for sailor, is made of jute.

Jute Won Away Our Silver Dollars

Natives sow jute seed in April. The favorite location is an alluvial sand bank. Possibility of flooding hangs over the crop in the early stages, but later it can withstand very heavy water. In August plants are cut, tied in bundles and anchored in creeks. Soon the bark is sufficiently rotted and the fibers loosened. Native workers laboring knee-deep in the streams strip each piece with a peculiar, swift movement. The dry, shredded fibers go in bales to Calcutta, the main market. Native Indian agriculturists with small holdings farm nearly 3,000,000 acres with jute every year.

A crisis in Indian jute back in the war year of 1918 echoed in Congress in Washington, D. C.; and sent 200,000,000 American silver dollars to India. At that time all England's problems were not on the war fronts. Britain had been paying out silver rupees in large quantities to her Indian troops and had been buying supplies, notably jute, until she had almost no silver left. Natives never thought of putting silver in a bank where it might continue in circulation; they hammered the rupees into jewelry or hid them. But the fighting forces had to have jute for tarpaulin and sacking. England asked the United States to help her out. An act was hurried through Congress. It ordered the silver dollars that stood back of silver certificates into the melting pot. Treasure ships carried the horde to India. The dollars that became rupees bought jute and the restless Indian farmer became pacified.

Bulletin No. 4, November 29, 1926.

Some Forthcoming Numbers of the National Geographic Magazine

RECENT announcement to members of the National Geographic Society (see statement following Bulletin No. 3) listed several features of special interest to schools, as follows:

Lifelike portraits of thirty-three different breeds of chickens in all parts of the world, painted by a staff scientific artist, are to be reproduced in exact colors in a spring issue.

Sixteen beautiful pastoral scenes in duotone, showing shepherds and their flocks in the green pastures and by the still waters of Palestine, reverently illustrate each verse of the Twenty-third Psalm, in the December, 1926, issue of The Geographic.

Exact color reproductions of superb paintings and color photographs of 250 interesting wild flower varieties will illustrate an article on the flora of the Pacific Coast.

Biology students will await eagerly the appearance of a series of the first natural color photographs ever made beneath the sea, showing exactly how fishes, coral, plants and other marine life look in their natural element.

Fifteen photographic expeditions of The Society are traversing 29 countries, including Syria, the New Turkey, Bokhara, Samarkand, Yugoslavia and other new lands of Europe, China, Scandinavia, various states of the United States, Great Britain and Turkestan. These will add to the extensive library of photographs which visualize and focus the study of geography, made available to schools through the pages of their National Geographic Magazine.

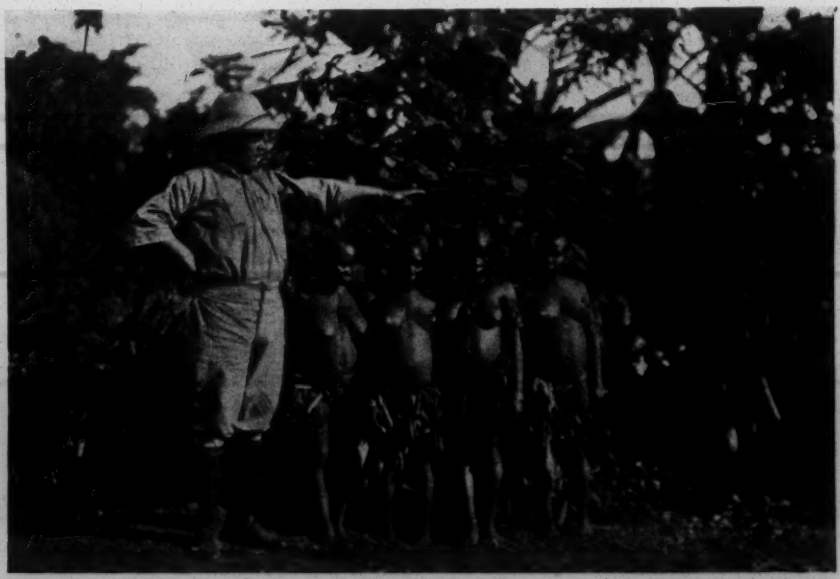
for marriage in Pygmyland is a matter of bargaining between the girl's father and the diminutive swain.

In some tribes the fixed price for a wife is from ten to fifteen arrows, but if the prospective bridegroom appears over-enthusiastic the cost may be increased by one or two spears or some tobacco. After the ceremony the husband goes hunting and the wife goes to work.

Whole Tribe Attacks Elephant

A red letter day is celebrated among African Pygmies when an elephant is killed. When they smell an elephant in the vicinity of their encampment the whole tribe is called into action. They climb trees in the path they believe the animal will take. Then, jumping from limb to limb, the hunters spear the animal, and by so doing cause him to collide with trees, thus virtually making him commit suicide.

Once assured the elephant can do them no harm they swarm over him like ants and cut away his flesh for food. They have no way of preserving the flesh so they are apt to hover about the carcass until nothing but the skeleton remains. Tusks are hidden to be traded for tobacco and salt, which are among the few Pygmy luxuries.



© National Geographic Society

LADIES OF LILLIPUT

Although they are often no larger than an eight-year-old American boy, Pygmies dare to hunt elephants. Stealing upon a herd through the grass, they bring their quarry to earth by hamstringing the huge animal with a quick knife slash. Another method is to climb trees and spear the animals from above.